

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

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FM AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE TANANARIVE 0949

E. O. 11652: DECON 31DEC73

TAGS: OEXC, MA, US

SUBJ: PROPOSED CHANGES IX FONMIN RATSIRAKA'S ITINERARY

REFS: A) STATE 133543; B) STATE 137247

1. WE HAVE BEEN WITHHOLDING COMMENTS ON REFTEL A UNTIL WE SAW WHETHER FONMIN RATSIRAKA WOULD RETURN TANANARIVE BETWEEN VISITS TO JAPAN AND US AND WHETHER WE COULD DISCUSS POSSIBLE ITINERARY CHANGES WITH HIM. HOWEVER, IN VIEW REFTEL B, IT DOES NOT APPEAR AT ALL LIKELY THAT RATSIRAKA WILL RETURN TANANARIVE IN INTERIM. WE ATTEMPTING VERIFY THIS CONCLUSION WITH FOREIGN OFFICE'S SEC GEN BEZAZA, BUT IF PAST EXPERIENCE IS GUIDE, HE UNLIKELY HAVE INFO ON FONMIN'S SCHEDULE.

2. OUR COMMENTS RE POSSIBLE ITINERARY CHANGES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

A) RATSIRAKA WAS HANDED COPIES OF ITINERARY AS PREVIOUSLY PROPOSED ON 28 JUN AND SEEMED SATISFIED WITH IT. HE MADE NO MENTION TO US OF DESIRE VISIT GRAND CANYON.

B) IN VIEW HIS DESIRE GIVE VISIT MAXIMUM AURA OF BUSINESS AND MINIMUM IMPRESSION OF TOURISM, WE DO NOT BELIEVE IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE ELIMINATE VISIT TO RICE PROJECTS IN LOUISIANA AND SUBSTITUTE VISIT TO GRAND CANYON WITHOUT CONSULTING HIM.

C) POSSIBLY HE WOULD BE PREPARED ADD ADDITIONAL DAY AT END OF ITINERARY SINCE VISIT TO CANADA OCCURRING BEFORE.

D) SEE NOTHING PARTICULAR TO BE GAINED FROM OUR STAND-

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POINT BY HAVING RATSIRAKA MEET WITH AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN.

WITH HIS TALKS TO BUSINESSMEN IN JAPAN BEING PUBLICLY BILLED
AS EFFORT REDUCE FRENCH DOMINANCE IN MADAGASCAR, THERE COULD
IN FACT BE SOME POLITICAL DISADVANTAGE IN HAVING HIM DO SO.

3. IF DEPT WISHES PURSUE ITINERARY CHANGES, SUGGEST THEY BE
CHECKED OUT WITH RATSIRAKA THROUGH EMBASSY PARIS (SINCE HE
PRESUMABLY WILL SPEND FEW DAYS THERE EN ROUTE FROM TOKYO TO
OTTAWA) OR THROUGH EMBASSY OTTAWA.MENDENHALL

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